



Since January 2020 Elsevier has created a COVID-19 resource centre with free information in English and Mandarin on the novel coronavirus COVID-19. The COVID-19 resource centre is hosted on Elsevier Connect, the company's public news and information website.

Elsevier hereby grants permission to make all its COVID-19-related research that is available on the COVID-19 resource centre - including this research content - immediately available in PubMed Central and other publicly funded repositories, such as the WHO COVID database with rights for unrestricted research re-use and analyses in any form or by any means with acknowledgement of the original source. These permissions are granted for free by Elsevier for as long as the COVID-19 resource centre remains active.

Bias as a source of inconsistency in ivermectin trials for COVID-19: A systematic review. Ivermectin's suggested benefits are mainly based on potentially biased results.

Ariel Izcovich , Sasha Peiris , Martín Ragusa , Fernando Tortosa ,  
Gabriel Rada , Sylvain Aldighieri , Ludovic Reveiz

PII: S0895-4356(21)00422-4  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2021.12.018>  
Reference: JCE 10726



To appear in: *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*

Accepted date: 12 December 2021

Please cite this article as: Ariel Izcovich , Sasha Peiris , Martín Ragusa , Fernando Tortosa ,  
Gabriel Rada , Sylvain Aldighieri , Ludovic Reveiz , Bias as a source of inconsistency in  
ivermectin trials for COVID-19: A systematic review. Ivermectin's suggested benefits are  
mainly based on potentially biased results., *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* (2021), doi:  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2021.12.018>

This is a PDF file of an article that has undergone enhancements after acceptance, such as the addition of a cover page and metadata, and formatting for readability, but it is not yet the definitive version of record. This version will undergo additional copyediting, typesetting and review before it is published in its final form, but we are providing this version to give early visibility of the article. Please note that, during the production process, errors may be discovered which could affect the content, and all legal disclaimers that apply to the journal pertain.

## Highlights

- We found substantial differences in the results of studies with or without important methodological limitations.
- Ivermectin's suggested benefits are mainly based on potentially biased results.
- There is substantial uncertainty on ivermectin's effects for patients with COVID-19 or exposed to SARS-COV-2 and further research is needed.

Original Article

**Bias as a source of inconsistency in ivermectin trials for COVID-19: A systematic review. Ivermectin's suggested benefits are mainly based on potentially biased results.**

Ariel Izcovich<sup>1</sup>\*ariel.izcovich@gmail.com, ORCID iD:0000-0001-9053-4396,

Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing, Visualization, Supervision., Sasha Peiris<sup>1</sup>, Data curation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing, Martín Ragusa<sup>2</sup>, Fernando Tortosa<sup>2</sup>, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Gabriel Rada<sup>3</sup>, Methodology, Writing - Review & Editing, Sylvain Aldighieri<sup>1</sup>, Writing - Review & Editing, Project administration, Funding acquisition, Ludovic Reveiz<sup>1</sup>, Methodology, Writing - Review & Editing, Supervision, Project administration, Funding acquisition

<sup>1</sup>Incident Management System for the Covid-19 Response. Pan American Health Organization, 525 23<sup>rd</sup> St, NW, Washington DC20037-2895

<sup>2</sup>Evidence and Intelligence for Action in Health Department. Pan American Health Organization,  
525 23<sup>rd</sup> St, NW, Washington DC20037-2895

<sup>3</sup>Fundación Epistemonikos, Holanda 895, Providencia, Santiago, Chile

\* **Corresponding author:** Ariel Izcovich

## **Keywords**

COVID-19; severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2; Coronavirus Infections;  
Systematic review; ivermectin; bias

## **Abstract**

### **Objective**

The objective of this systematic review is to summarize the effects of ivermectin for the prevention and treatment of patients with COVID-19 and to assess inconsistencies in results from individual studies with focus on risk of bias due to methodological limitations.

### **Study Design and Setting**

We searched the L.OVE platform through July 6, 2021 and included randomized trials (RCTs) comparing ivermectin to standard or other active treatments. We conducted random-effects pairwise meta-analysis, assessed the certainty of evidence using the GRADE approach and performed sensitivity analysis excluding trials with risk of bias.

### **Results**

We included 29 RCTs which enrolled 5592 cases. Overall, the certainty of the evidence was very low to low suggesting that ivermectin may result in important benefits. However, after excluding trials classified as “high risk” or “some concerns” in the risk of bias assessment, most estimates of effect changed substantially: Compared to standard of care, low certainty evidence suggests

that ivermectin may not reduce mortality (RD 7 fewer per 1000) nor mechanical ventilation (RD 6 more per 1000), and moderate certainty evidence shows that it probably does not increase symptom resolution or improvement (RD 14 more per 1000) nor viral clearance (RD 12 fewer per 1000).

## **Conclusion**

Ivermectin may not improve clinically important outcomes in patients with COVID-19 and its effects as a prophylactic intervention in exposed individuals are uncertain. Previous reports concluding important benefits associated with ivermectin are based on potentially biased results reported by studies with substantial methodological limitations. Further research is needed.

## **Introduction**

There is an urgent need to expand the evidence base on interventions for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19, an infection caused by SARS-CoV-2 that has the potential of progression into pneumonia, multi-organ failure and death.[1] The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a rapid increase in the number of studies testing potential therapeutic options, raising concerns about the quality and lack of scientific integrity, and also about the spread of this information, leading to the so-called “infodemic”.[2,3] According to the World Health Organization (WHO) international registry of clinical trials platform (ICTRP),[4] hundreds of potential interventions are being assessed in more than 10,000 clinical trials and observational studies.

Many drugs including ivermectin, were repurposed for the treatment of COVID-19, most often based on biological plausibility, in vitro research, or pathophysiological considerations.

Ivermectin is a successful broad-spectrum anti-parasitic, included in WHO essential medicines

list used to treat several neglected tropical diseases.[5] It emerged as a potential treatment for COVID-19 in mid-2020, following an *in vitro* study demonstrating its anti-viral properties.[6] Multiple systematic reviews have assessed the benefits and harm of ivermectin for COVID-19 patients with inconsistent findings and conclusions.[7] Although some organizations and groups have argued strongly in favor of implementing ivermectin for treatment and/or prevention of COVID-19,[8] current key clinical practice guidelines recommend against its use outside the context of clinical trials.[9-12]

Reasons for these major discrepancies are probably related to different evidence analytical and/or interpretation approaches. Assessing the risk of bias is one of the pillars of any systematic review and has proven to be essential for evidence interpretation in the present pandemic context where results of studies with major methodological limitations have led to erroneous conclusions, waste of resources and patients' exposure to potentially harmful interventions.[3,13,14] Nevertheless, most available systematic reviews on ivermectin for COVID-19 have not appropriately assessed risk of bias as a potential explanation for inconsistency between trial results. Therefore, this systematic review aims to summarize the best available evidence on ivermectin for prevention and treatment of COVID-19 patients and explore potential explanations for heterogeneity in RCTs results with focus on studies methodological limitations.

## Methods

This systematic review report is consistent with Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement.[15]

## Protocol registration

This systematic review is part of a larger project that aims to conduct multiple systematic reviews for different questions relevant to COVID-19. The protocol stating the shared objectives and methodology of these reviews was published elsewhere.[16]

## Search strategy

We systematically searched in the Living Overview of Evidence (L.OVE; <https://app.iloveevidence.com/covid19>) platform, for studies on Ivermectin for COVID-19. L.OVE platform is a system that maps PICO (Patient– Intervention–Comparison–Outcome) questions to a repository developed by Epistemonikos Foundation and is the search platform for the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) living systematic review of potential therapeutics for COVID-19.<sup>7</sup> The search terms and databases covered are described on the L.OVE platform methods section available at: <https://app.iloveevidence.com/covid19/methods>. The repository that feeds the L.OVE platform was developed and is maintained through the automated and manual screening of multiple databases, trial registries, preprint servers and other sources. The last version of the methods, the total number of sources screened, and a living flow diagram and report of the project is updated regularly on the website. The searches cover the period from inception date of each database. We last searched the platform on July 6, 2021. There were no restrictions applied to the language or publication status.

## Study selection

Two reviewers (A.I and G.R) working independently and in duplicate, performed study selection, including screening of titles and abstracts and of potentially eligible full-text articles. Reviewers resolved disagreements by discussion.

We included randomized controlled trials (RCTs) that recruited adults with suspected, probable, or confirmed COVID-19, or that were exposed to SARS-COV-2, comparing systemic ivermectin alone or in combination with other drugs, against placebo, standard care or other interventions, and reported on clinical important outcomes (see “Outcomes of interest” below). We included trials regardless of publication status (peer reviewed, in press, or preprint) or language. No restrictions were applied based on severity of COVID-19 illness, setting in which the trial was conducted (e.g. outpatient, inpatient, critical), dose administered or duration of treatment. We excluded studies in which inhaled ivermectin was used as intervention.

## **Data extraction**

For each eligible trial one reviewer (A.I) extracted data using a standardized, pilot-tested data extraction form. The reviewer collected information on trial characteristics (trial registration, publication status, study status, design), participant characteristics (country, age, sex, comorbidities, and severity), and outcomes of interest. Extracted data was confirmed by a second reviewer (F.T). Discrepancies were resolved through discussion

## **Outcomes of interest**

We selected clinically important outcomes considering published prioritization exercises performed in the context of different clinical practice guidelines.[9,11] We included all-cause mortality and invasive mechanical ventilation as critical outcomes, and symptom resolution or improvement, hospitalizations, viral clearance, symptomatic infection, and severe adverse events as important outcomes. For symptom resolution or improvement, we considered the proportion of patients with complete resolution of symptoms, or the proportion of patients discharged from



hospital or the proportion of patients with important symptom improvement as reported by investigators. For viral clearance we considered the proportion of patients with negative PCR test. For severe adverse events we used the definition implemented by the investigators.

## **Risk of Bias**

Two reviewers (A.I and M.R) independently assessed the risk of bias of all included trials using the revised Cochrane Risk of Bias 2.0 tool for randomized trials (RoB 2),[17] focusing on randomization, allocation concealment, blinding, attrition, or other biases relevant to the estimates of effect. In assessing the domain “risk of bias arising from randomization process”, in addition to exploring the balance of baseline prognostic in individual trials, we assessed overall balance by constructing Forest plots. We assumed that lack of blinding was less likely to introduce bias to “mortality” and “mechanical ventilation” outcomes hence we assessed risk of bias separately for those two outcomes as follows. For “mortality” and “mechanical ventilation” outcomes we rated trials at high risk of bias overall if one or more domains were rated as “high risk of bias”, and as “some concerns” if no domains were rated as “high risk of bias” and “Risk of bias arising from randomization process” and/or “Risk of bias due to missing outcome data” and/or “Risk of bias in selection of reported results” domains were classified as “some concerns”. The remaining trials were rated as “low risk of bias”. For other outcomes, we rated trials at high risk of bias overall if one or more domains were rated as “high risk of bias”, as “some concerns” if no domains were rated as “high risk of bias” and one or more domains were rated as “some concerns”, and low risk of bias overall if all domains were rated as “low risk of bias”. Reviewers resolved discrepancies by discussion.

## Data synthesis

We summarized the effect of interventions on selected outcomes using relative risks (RRs) and corresponding 95% confidence intervals (95% CIs). We conducted frequentist random-effects pairwise meta-analyses using the R package “meta” in RStudio Version 1.4.1103.[18] For the primary analysis, we assumed that interventions used in some trials as active comparators (hydroxychloroquine and lopinavir-ritonavir), are not related to important effects in patients with COVID-19.[9] We considered those interventions as standard of care and performed sensitivity analysis to assess the robustness of results (see subgroup and sensitivity analyses).

## Certainty of the evidence

We assessed the certainty of evidence using the grading of recommendations assessment, development, and evaluation (GRADE) approach.[19] Two methodologists with experience in using GRADE rated each domain for each comparison separately and resolved discrepancies by consensus. We rated the certainty for each comparison and outcome as high, moderate, low, or very low, based on considerations of risk of bias, inconsistency, indirectness, publication bias, and imprecision. We made judgments of imprecision using a minimally contextualised approach with the null effect as a threshold. This minimally contextualised approach considers whether the 95%CI includes the null effect, or, when the point estimate is close to the null effect, whether the 95%CI lies within the boundaries of small but important benefit and harm that corresponds to every outcome assessed.[20,21] To define severe or very severe imprecision we considered if the 95%CI included not only the null effect, but important benefits and harms. We used MAGIC authoring and publication platform (<https://app.magicapp.org/>) to generate the tables summarizing our findings. We calculated the absolute risks and risk differences from the RRs

(and their 95% CIs) and the median risk in the control groups of studies reporting on severe patients for “mortality” and “mechanical ventilation” outcomes. For the remaining outcomes we used RRs (and their 95% CIs) and the median risk in the control groups of all analysed trials. To communicate our findings and conclusions using statements we followed published guidance.[22]

## **Subgroup and sensitivity analyses**

To assess if overall estimates of effects could be influenced by trials reporting potentially biased results, we performed sensitivity analysis excluding trials categorized as “high risk of bias” and “some concerns”. We expected smaller effects after excluding those trials. In addition, as there is high certainty evidence on the lack of efficacy of some interventions for the treatment of patients with COVID-19 such as hydroxychloroquine and Lopinavir-Ritonavir,[9] for the primary analysis, we considered those interventions as a part of the standard of care. However, we performed sensitivity analyses excluding trials in which hydroxychloroquine or Lopinavir-Ritonavir were used as comparators. We performed subgroup analysis based on intervention implemented and baseline disease severity, we expected larger effects in trials in which ivermectin was implemented in combination with other interventions and in patients with less severe disease.

## **Update of this systematic review**

An artificial intelligence algorithm deployed in the COVID-19 topic of the L.OVE platform (<https://app.iloveevidence.com/covid19>) will provide instant notification of articles with a high likelihood of eligibility. These will be screened by paired reviewers iteratively who will also

conduct data extraction and updates of the estimates of effects and certainty of the evidence. We will consider resubmission to a journal if there is a substantial modification of the effect estimate or certainty of the evidence for ivermectin, at the discretion of the reviewer team.

## Results

The search strategy identified 680 potentially eligible records, of which 29 RCTs (reported in 78 references) were included. We identified two additional studies which we decided not to include. One was reported as a cluster randomized trial but methods and results were poorly reported and not consistent with a RCT.[23] The other was mentioned in a published review[24] but we were unable to obtain the full text.[25] We intended to contact the authors of these and other three included studies[26,27,28] for further methodological details by email, but only one responded.[28] On July 14, 2021, one of the included studies was retracted from the preprint server due to research misconduct concerns that are being investigated.[29] As the primary aim of our review was to assess the influence of potentially biased results on ivermectin's effects interpretation, we decided not to exclude it. The selection process is described by the PRISMA flow diagram in S1 Figure. The list of excluded studies is available upon request.

## Trial characteristics

There was a total of 5592 patients from 29 RCTs,[26-54] in which ivermectin was compared against standard of care or other treatments (S1 Table). Twenty trials were published in peer reviewed journals and nine were only published as preprints. One trial reported the results of three different cohorts, one of severe patients, one of mild patients and one of exposed persons,

we therefore analyzed each cohort as a different trial.[29] The sample size ranged from 24 to 1342, with 2830 assigned to Ivermectin and 2483 assigned to control. Eighteen trials included patients with mild to moderate COVID-19,[26,28-30,32-45] three studies included patients with severe to critical COVID-19,[29,46,47] six studies included patients with mild to critical disease,[27,48,49,50,51,52] and four studies included non-infected patients exposed to SARS-COV-2.[29,31,53,54]

Ivermectin administered dose varied from 12 mg once to 400 µgm/kg once a day for 4 days. Ivermectin alone was used in most trials but five in which the intervention implemented was a combination of ivermectin with doxycycline,[26,32,34,48] or iota-Carrageenan.[54] Comparator was standard of care with or without placebo in most trials. Active comparators included hydroxychloroquine or cloroquine,[29,47] hydroxychloroquine plus azythomicin,[32] lopinavir-ritonavir[50] and vitamin C.[31]

## **Risk of Bias**

The risk of bias assessment of the 29 included trials is summarized in table 1. For mortality and mechanical ventilation, our assessment resulted in high risk of bias for four RCT (including the study retracted due to misconduct concerns),[29] some concerns for two and low risk of bias for seven RCTs. For all remaining outcomes, our assessment resulted in high risk of bias for thirteen RCTs, some concerns for nine and low risk of bias for seven RCTs. Most trials did not provide enough information to assess baseline differences between arms. Overall assessment of baseline prognostic factors suggested that ischemic heart disease was less frequent in patients assigned to ivermectin (S2 Figure). A detailed description of the trials' methodological limitations is provided in a supplementary table (S2 Table).

**Table 1. Risk of bias of included trials**

Journal Pre-proof

Study	Risk-of-bias arising from randomization process	Risk-of-bias due to deviations from the intended interventions	Risk-of-bias due to missing outcome data	Risk-of-bias in measurement of the outcome	Risk-of-bias in selection of the reported result	Overall Risk-of-bias judgement	
						Mortality and Invasive mechanical ventilation	Symptom resolution or improvement, hospitalization, infection, viral clearance and adverse events
Shouman et al <sup>53</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	High
Chowdhury et al <sup>32</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	High
Podder et al <sup>33</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	High
Hashim et al <sup>48</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	High	High
Elgazzar et al <sup>29</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	High	High
Krolewiecki et al <sup>35</sup>	Low	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	Low	Some concerns
Niaee et al <sup>49</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	High	High
Ahmed et al <sup>26</sup>	High	Low	Low	Low	Some concerns	-	High
Chaccour et al <sup>30</sup>	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	-	Low
Chachar et al <sup>36</sup>	Some Concerns	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	Some concerns
Babalola et al <sup>50</sup>	Low	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	Some concerns
Kirti et al <sup>37</sup>	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Chahla et al <sup>54</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	High
Mohan et al <sup>38</sup>	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	-	Low
Shahbaznejad et al <sup>51</sup>	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Samaha et al <sup>39</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	High
Bukhari et al <sup>40</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	High
Okumus et al <sup>46</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	High	High
Beltran et al <sup>27</sup>	Some Concerns	Low	Low	Low	Low	Some concerns	Some concerns
López-Medina et al <sup>41</sup>	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Bermejo Galan et al <sup>47</sup>	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Pott-Junior et al <sup>52</sup>	Low	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	Some concerns
Kishoria et al <sup>42</sup>	Low	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	Some concerns
Seet et al <sup>31</sup>	Low	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	High
Mahmud et al <sup>33</sup>	Low	Low	Some Concerns	Low	Low	Some concerns	Some concerns
Abd-Elsalam et al <sup>43</sup>	Low	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	Low	Some concerns
Biber et al <sup>44</sup>	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	Low	-	Some concerns
Faisal et al <sup>45</sup>	High	Some Concerns	Low	Some Concerns	Low	-	High

Vallejos et al <sup>28</sup>	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
------------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

## Effects on assessed outcomes

Table 2. and Figure 1. provide a summary of finding for all assessed outcomes.

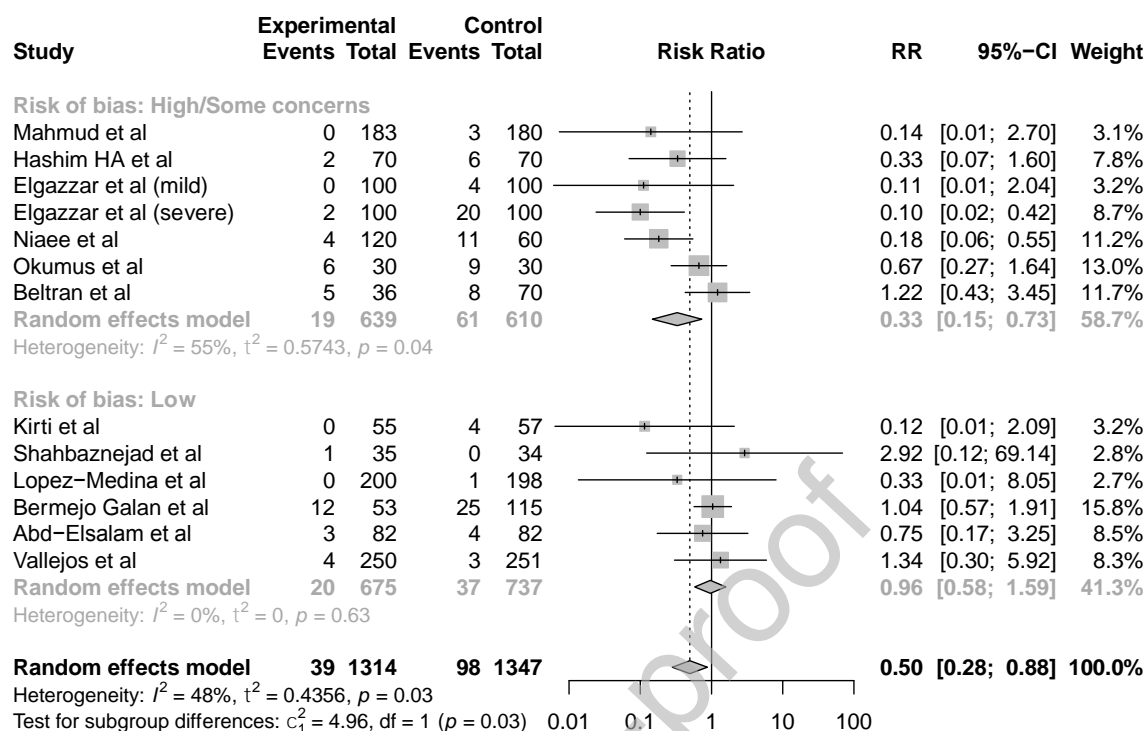
### Mortality

Twelve trials with 2661 patients reported on mortality.[27,28,29,34,37,41,43,46-49,51]

Ivermectin may reduce mortality (RR 0.50, 95% CI:0.28 to 0.88; RD 91 fewer per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 132 fewer to 22 fewer). The certainty of the evidence was low because of serious risk of bias and serious inconsistency ( $I^2$  48%). Sensitivity analysis excluding six trials classified as “some concerns” or “high risk of bias” showed that ivermectin may not reduce mortality (RR 0.96, 95% CI:0.58 to 1.59; RD 7 fewer per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 71 fewer to 92 more) (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Comparison: ivermectin vs. Standard of care; Outcome: mortality; Analysis: subgroups by risk of bias classification.**





## Mechanical ventilation

Six trials with 1046 patients, classified as “low risk of bias”, reported on mechanical ventilation.[28,35,37,43,47,51] Ivermectin may not reduce the requirement of mechanical ventilation (RR 1.05, 95% CI:0.64 to 1.72; RD 6 more per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 43 fewer to 86 more) (S3 Figure in S1 Appendix). The certainty of the evidence was low because of very serious imprecision.

## Symptom resolution or improvement

Eleven trials with 1865 patients reported on symptom resolution or improvement.[27,29,32,34,36-38,41,42,45,46] Ivermectin may increase symptom resolution or improvement (RR 1.17, 95% CI:1.05 to 1.30); RD 121 more per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 36

more to 214 more). The certainty of the evidence was low because of serious risk of bias and serious inconsistency ( $I^2$  79%). Sensitivity analysis excluding eight trials classified as “some concerns” or “high risk of bias” showed that ivermectin probably does not increase symptom resolution or improvement (RR 1.02, 95% CI:0.96 to 1.10; RD 14 more per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 29 fewer to 71 more) (S4 Figure in S1 Appendix).

## **Hospitalization**

Four trials with 1088 patients reported on hospitalization.[28,39,41,44] Ivermectin may decrease hospitalizations (RR 0.62, 95% CI:0.36 to 1.07); RD 21 fewer per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 35 fewer to 4 more). The certainty of the evidence was low because of very serious imprecision. Sensitivity analysis excluding two trials classified as “some concerns” or “high risk of bias” showed that ivermectin may decrease hospitalizations (RR 0.67, 95% CI:0.37 to 1.19); RD 18 fewer per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 34 fewer to 10 more) (S5 Figure in S1 Appendix).

## **Symptomatic infection in exposed persons**

Four trials including 1974 patients, classified as “high risk of bias”, reported on symptomatic infection.[29,31,53,54] Ivermectin may reduce symptomatic infection (RR 0.22, 95% CI:0.09 to 0.53); RD 124 fewer per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 145 fewer to 75 fewer) (S6 Figure in S1 Appendix). The certainty of the evidence was low because of very serious risk of bias.

## **Viral clearance**

Thirteen trials with 1628 patients reported on viral clearance.[26,28,32,33,34,37,38,40,42,44,46,50,52] Ivermectin may increase viral clearance (RR

1.19, 95% CI: 1.02 to 1.38); RD 76 more per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 8 more to 152 more).

The certainty of the evidence was low because of serious risk of bias and serious inconsistency ( $I^2$  56%). Sensitivity analysis excluding ten trials classified as “some concerns” or “high risk of bias” showed that ivermectin probably does not increase viral clearance (RR 0.97, 95% CI: 0.79 to 1.19); RD 12 fewer per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 84 fewer to 76 more) (S7 Figure in S1 Appendix).

### **Severe Adverse events**

Four trials with 824 patients reported on severe adverse events.[34,35,41,52] It is uncertain if Ivermectin increases or decreases severe adverse events (RR 1.04, 95% CI: 0.32 to 3.38); RD 0 more per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 3 fewer to 12 more). The certainty of the evidence was very low because of serious risk of bias and very serious imprecision. Sensitivity analysis excluding ten trials classified as “some concerns” or “high risk of bias” showed that it is uncertain if ivermectin increases or decreases severe adverse events (RR 0.99, 95% CI: 0.14 to 6.96); RD 0 more per 1,000 participants, 95% CI: 4 fewer to 30 more) (S8 Figure in S1 Appendix).

**Figure 1. Results of primary analysis and sensitivity analysis excluding trials with significant methodological limitations**

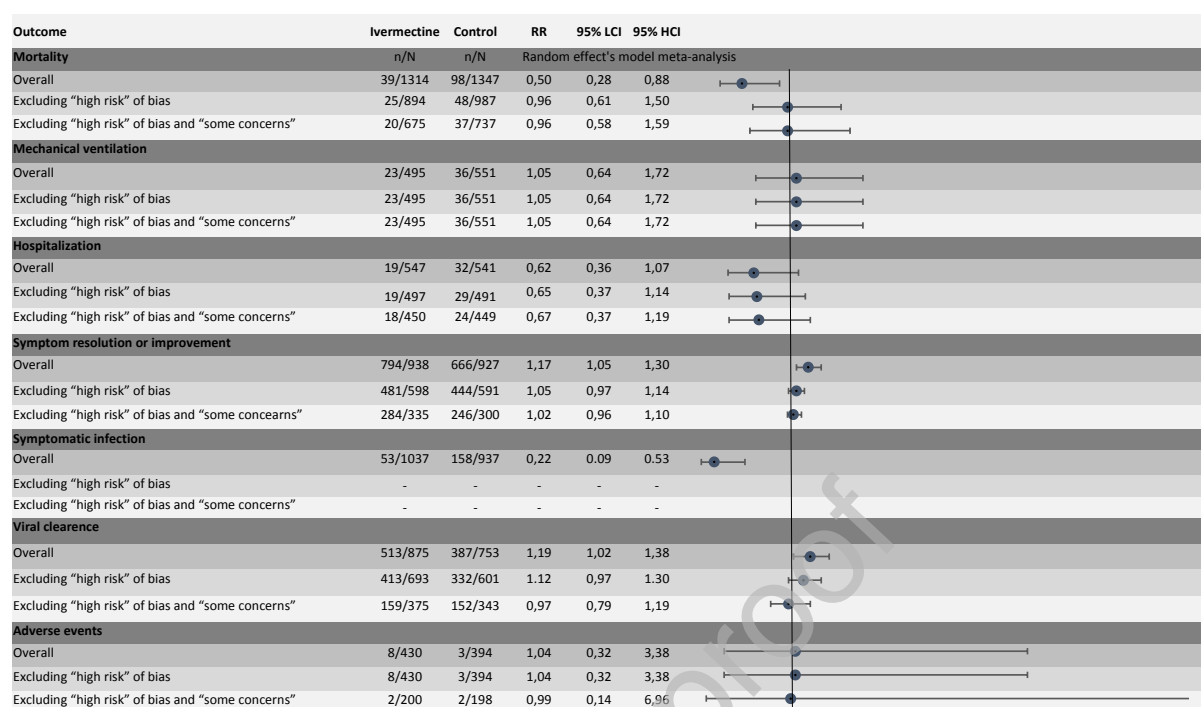


Table 2. Summary of findings table

Outcome Timeframe	Study results and measurements	Absolute effect estimates		Certainty of the Evidence (Quality of evidence)	Plain text summary
		SOC	Ivermectin		
Mortality (Overall)	Relative risk: 0.50 (CI 95% 0.28 - 0.88) Based on data from 2661 patients in 12 studies Follow up: median 30 days	<b>183</b> per 1000	<b>92</b> per 1000	<b>Low</b> Due to serious risk of bias and serious inconsistency <sup>a,b</sup>	Ivermectin may reduce mortality
		Difference: <b>91 fewer per 1000</b> (CI 95% 132 fewer - 22 fewer)			
Mortality (excluding "some concerns" and "high risk of bias" trials)	Relative risk: 0.96 (CI 95% 0.58 - 1.59) Based on data from 1412 patients in 6 studies Follow up: median 25.5 days	<b>183</b> per 1000	<b>176</b> per 1000	<b>Low</b> Due to very serious imprecision <sup>c</sup>	Ivermectin may have little or no difference on mortality
		Difference: <b>7 fewer per 1000</b> (CI 95% 71 fewer - 92 more)			
Mechanical ventilation (overall - all studies classified as low risk of bias)	Relative risk: 1.05 (CI 95% 0.64 - 1.72) Based on data from 1046 patients in 6 studies Follow up: median 30 days	<b>119</b> per 1000	<b>125</b> per 1000	<b>Low</b> Due to very serious imprecision <sup>c</sup>	Ivermectin may have little or no difference on mechanical ventilation
		Difference: <b>6 more per 1000</b> (CI 95% 43 fewer - 86 more)			
Symptom resolution or improvement (overall)	Relative risk: 1.17 (CI 95% 1.05 - 1.3) Based on data from 1865 patients in 11 studies Follow up: median 10 days	<b>714</b> per 1000	<b>835</b> per 1000	<b>Low</b> Due to serious risk of bias and serious inconsistency <sup>a,b</sup>	Ivermectin may increase symptom resolution or improvement
		Difference: <b>121 more per 1000</b> (CI 95% 36 more - 214 more)			

Symptom resolution or improvement (excluding “some concerns” and “high risk of bias” trials)	Relative risk: 1.02 (CI 95% 0.96 - 1.1) Based on data from 635 patients in 3 studies Follow up: median 14 days	<b>714</b> per 1000	<b>728</b> per 1000	<b>Moderate</b> Due to serious imprecision <sup>d</sup>	Ivermectin probably has little or no difference on symptom resolution or improvement
		Difference: <b>14 more per 1000</b> (CI 95% 29 fewer - 71 more)			
Hospitalization (overall)	Relative risk: 0.62 (CI 95% 0.36 - 1.07) Based on data from 1088 patients in 4 studies Follow up: median 17.5 days	<b>54</b> per 1000	<b>35</b> per 1000	<b>Low</b> Due to very serious imprecision <sup>e</sup>	Ivermectin may reduce hospitalizations
		Difference: <b>21 fewer per 1000</b> (CI 95% 35 fewer - 4 more)			
Hospitalization (excluding some concerns and high risk of bias studies)	Relative risk: 0.67 (CI 95% 0.37 - 1.19) Based on data from 899 patients in 2 study Follow up: median 25.5 days	<b>54</b> per 1000	<b>36</b> per 1000	<b>Low</b> Due to very serious imprecision <sup>e</sup>	Ivermectin may reduce hospitalizations
		Difference: <b>18 fewer per 1000</b> (CI 95% 34 fewer - 8 more)			
Symptomatic infection (overall - all studies classified as high risk of bias) <sup>14</sup>	Relative risk: 0.22 (CI 95% 0.09 - 0.53) Based on data from 1974 patients in 4 studies Follow up: median 21 days	<b>159</b> per 1000	<b>35</b> per 1000	<b>Low</b> Due to very serious risk of bias <sup>a</sup>	Ivermectin may decrease symptomatic infection
		Difference: <b>124 fewer per 1000</b> (CI 95% 145 fewer - 75 fewer)			
Viral clearance (overall)	Relative risk: 1.19 (CI 95% 1.02 - 1.38) Based on data from 1628 patients in 13 studies Follow up: median 6 days	<b>400</b> per 1000	<b>476</b> per 1000	<b>Low</b> Due to serious risk of bias and serious inconsistency <sup>a,b</sup>	Ivermectin may increase viral clearance
		Difference: <b>76 more per 1000</b> (CI 95% 8 more - 152 more)			
Viral clearance (excluding “some concerns” and “high risk of bias” trials)	Relative risk: 0.97 (CI 95% 0.79 - 1.19) Based on data from 718 patients in 3 studies Follow up: median 5 days	<b>400</b> per 1000	<b>388</b> per 1000	<b>Moderate</b> Due to very serious imprecision <sup>d</sup>	Ivermectin probably has little or no difference on viral clearance
		Difference: <b>12 fewer per 1000</b> (CI 95% 84 fewer - 76 more)			
Severe adverse events (overall)	Relative risk: 1.04 (CI 95% 0.32 - 3.38) Based on data from 824 patients in 4 studies Follow up: median 29 days	<b>5</b> per 1000	<b>5</b> per 1000	<b>Very low</b> Due to serious risk of bias and very serious imprecision <sup>a,c</sup>	We are uncertain whether ivermectin increases or decreases severe adverse events
		Difference: <b>0 fewer per 1000</b> (CI 95% 3 fewer - 12 more)			
Severe adverse events (excluding “some concerns” and “high risk of bias” trials)	Relative risk: 0.99 (CI 95% 0.14 - 6.96) Based on data from 398 patients in 1 study Follow up: median 21 days	<b>5</b> per 1000	<b>5</b> per 1000	<b>Very low</b> Due to extremely serious imprecision <sup>f</sup>	We are uncertain whether ivermectin increases or decreases severe adverse events
		Difference: <b>0 fewer per 1000</b> (CI 95% 4 fewer - 30 more)			

a. Risk of Bias: Serious or very serious. See table 1 and Appendix table 2.

b. Inconsistency: Serious. The confidence interval of some of the studies do not overlap with those of most included studies.

c. Imprecision: Very serious. 95%CI includes important benefits and harms.

d. Imprecision: Serious. 95%CI includes important benefits.

e. Imprecision: Very serious. 95%CI includes absence of benefits and low number of events.

f. Imprecision: Extremely serious. 95%CI includes important benefits and harms and very low number of events.

## Additional analysis

Subgroup and sensitivity analysis did not suggest differential effects according to baseline

disease severity, or when ivermectin was administered in combination with other interventions,

or when it was compared against hydroxychloroquine or lopinavir-ritonavir, or when different outcome measurements time frames were used (S9 to S30 Figures in S2 Appendix). Visual inspection of the funnel plot for mortality suggested possible publication bias, (S31 Figure in S2 Appendix) however egger's test was not statistically significant ( $p=0.13$ ). Visual inspection of funnel plots for symptom resolution or improvement and viral clearance did not suggest publication bias, egger's test results  $p=0.48$  and  $p=0.25$  respectively (S32 and S33 Figures in S2 Appendix).

## Discussion

This systematic review and meta-analysis provide a comprehensive overview of the available evidence on ivermectin for prevention and treatment of COVID-19. Overall, the body of evidence suggests that ivermectin may reduce mortality, may increase symptom resolution or improvement, may decrease hospitalizations, may increase viral clearance, and may decrease symptomatic infection in exposed individuals. However most trials have serious methodological limitations including lack of allocation concealment and lack of blinding, and reported results varied remarkably from striking benefits to null effects. GRADE assessment resulted in low or very low certainty of the evidence for all the outcomes, due to risk of bias, inconsistency, and imprecision. Visual inspection of funnel plot constructed for mortality outcome suggest possible publication bias which rises additional concerns about the certainty of the evidence on ivermectin's effects.

After excluding trials with significant methodological limitations inconsistency disappeared and results changed substantially. We found low certainty, due to imprecision, that ivermectin may

not reduce mortality, nor reduce invasive mechanical ventilation, and moderate certainty evidence that ivermectin probably does not increase viral clearance or symptom resolution or improvement. Regarding hospitalizations, results did not change importantly suggesting that ivermectin may modestly reduce hospitalizations. However, certainty of the evidence remained low due to very serious imprecision. It is uncertain if Ivermectin reduces or increases symptomatic infections in exposed individuals or increases severe adverse events as no trials classified as “low risk of bias” were identified, or the certainty of the evidence was very low.

Our systematic review has several strengths. The search strategy was comprehensive with explicit eligibility criteria, and no restrictions on language or publication status. We used a validated tool for risk of bias assessment and performed a thorough assessment providing details of trial limitations and potential important imbalances in baseline participant characteristics. We assessed the certainty of the evidence using the GRADE approach and interpreted the results considering absolute rather than relative effects.

Reporting was poor for a substantial number of included trials. For risk of bias assessment, we adopted a conservative approach and rated as low risk of bias only those trials for which it was clearly reported that no significant methodological limitations existed. Hence, we may have inappropriately classified some well executed trials as “some concerns” or “high risk of bias” due to their suboptimal reporting methods. Although for some trials we intended to contact the authors for clarification, most did not answer.

Multiple systematic reviews assessed ivermectin for COVID-19.[7] Most of these reviews were already outdated at the time of writing this manuscript.[55] We did not identify studies included in other reviews that were not captured in our search strategy. Only five reviews incorporated a substantial proportion of the studies assessed in our review including a recently published systematic review by the Cochrane collaboration in which the authors excluded studies with high risk of bias or that compared ivermectin against other active interventions.[24,56-59] In agreement with our findings, all these reviews concluded that most of the studies assessing ivermectin for COVID-19 have considerable methodological limitations, and three judged the certainty of the evidence as low to very low for all outcomes[56,57] or not robust enough to justify ivermectin's use.[58] The authors of one systematic review concluded that ivermectin "may have a role in decreasing mortality in mildly/moderately ill COVID-19 patients" although they graded the certainty on ivermectin's effect on mortality as very low.[59] Bryant et al. graded the certainty of the evidence as low or very low for all outcomes except mortality for which they report moderate certainty in important mortality reduction. In contrast to our analysis, they reached this conclusion by not downgrading the certainty of the evidence for inconsistency even though they reported there was significant, not fully explained, heterogeneity in studies' results. In addition, for mortality outcome, they report a sensitivity analysis excluding high risk of bias studies which, in contrast to our findings, did not result in different estimates of effect from the primary analysis. This can be explained by the fact that the authors did not exclude a relevant number of studies with important methodological limitations, that they classified as "unclear" risk of bias.[24]



Due to the excessive amount of rapidly published research on COVID-19, often referred to as an “infodemic”, [2,3] the scientific community has already faced a similar scenario to the one described for ivermectin in the present review. Small studies with significant methodological limitations suggested benefits for steroids, lopinavir-ritonavir, interferon  $\beta$ -1a and convalescent plasma among others. [60-63] However, those potential benefits were seldom confirmed and mostly discarded by well-designed adequately powered studies. [64-67] The limitations in the body of evidence on ivermectin for COVID-19 does not allow to reach firm conclusions, however the results of our analysis highlight that most of current suggested benefits of ivermectin are based on potentially biased estimates reported by studies with significant methodological limitations. Further research is needed to confirm or reject the effects of ivermectin on patient important outcomes.

There is an urgent need for high quality research both in health emergencies and in health relevant priorities in non-emergency settings. Those involved in evidence production should prioritize quality over quantity and speed to provide trustworthy information that is useful for decision-making. Although countries have capacities to conduct trials, and there exist global standards of quality assurance in clinical trials, [68-70] a global coordinating mechanism is needed to streamline and harmonize research findings on an international scale.

## Conclusions

Ivermectin may not improve clinically important outcomes in patients with COVID-19 and its effects as a prophylactic intervention in exposed individuals are uncertain. Previous reports

concluding important benefits associated with ivermectin are based on potentially biased results reported by studies with substantial methodological limitations. Further research is needed.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Victoria Stanford for contributing to the writing of the final version of the manuscript.

## Disclaimer

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist. Authors hold sole responsibility for the views expressed in the manuscript, which may not necessarily reflect the opinion or policy of the Pan American Health Organization.

## References

1. Hu Y, Sun J, Dai Z, et al. Prevalence and Severity of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *J Clin Virol* 2020; **127**: 104371.
2. The Lancet Infectious Diseases null. The COVID-19 infodemic. *Lancet Infect Dis* 2020; **20(8)**: 875.
3. Pearson H. How COVID broke the evidence pipeline. *Nature* 2021; **593(7858)**: 182–5.
4. WHO international registry of clinical trials platform (ICTRP).  
<https://www.who.int/clinical-trials-registry-platform>. Accessed June 27, 2021.

5. WHO essentials medicine list. <https://list.essentialmeds.org/medicines/58>. Accessed on June 27, 2021
6. Caly L, Druce JD, Catton MG, Jans DA, Wagstaff KM. The FDA-approved drug ivermectin inhibits the replication of SARS-CoV-2 in vitro. *Antiviral Res* 2020; **178**: 104787.
7. COVID-19 L.OVE platform (Epistemonikos Foundation). Ivermectin for COVID-19. [https://app.iloveevidence.com/loves/5e6fdb9669c00e4ac072701d?question\\_domain=5b1dcd8ae611de7ae84e8f14&population=5e7fce7e3d05156b5f5e032a&intervention=5e89364e3d05155262cbab44&classification=systematic-review&studify=true](https://app.iloveevidence.com/loves/5e6fdb9669c00e4ac072701d?question_domain=5b1dcd8ae611de7ae84e8f14&population=5e7fce7e3d05156b5f5e032a&intervention=5e89364e3d05155262cbab44&classification=systematic-review&studify=true)). Accessed June 26, 2021.
8. British Ivermectin Recommendation Development (BIRD). <https://bird-group.org>. Accessed on June 27, 2021
9. WHO. Therapeutics and COVID-19: living guideline. <https://app.magicapp.org/#/guideline/nBkO1E>. Accessed on June 27, 2021
10. IDSA Guidelines on the Treatment and Management of Patients with COVID-19. <https://www.idsociety.org/practice-guideline/covid-19-guideline-treatment-and-management/#toc-14>. Accessed on June 27, 2021
11. National COVID-19 clinical evidence task force. Caring for people with COVID-19. <https://covid19evidence.net.au/>. Accessed on June 27, 2021
12. Pan American Health Organization. Guidelines for Care of Critically Ill Adult Patients with COVID-19 in the Americas. <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/53895>. Accessed on June 27, 2021.

13. Raynaud M, Zhang H, Louis K, Goutaudier V, Wang J, Dubourg Q, et al. COVID-19-related medical research: a meta-research and critical appraisal. *BMC Med Res Methodol* 2021; **21**(1): 1.
14. Bull-Otterson L, Gray EB, Budnitz DS, et al. Hydroxychloroquine and Chloroquine Prescribing Patterns by Provider Specialty Following Initial Reports of Potential Benefit for COVID-19 Treatment — United States, January–June 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:1210–1215. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6935a4>
15. Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021; **372**: n71.
16. Rada G, Verdugo-Paiva F, Ávila C, et al. Evidence synthesis relevant to COVID-19: a protocol for multiple systematic reviews and overviews of systematic reviews. *Medwave*. 2020; **20**(3): e7868.
17. Sterne JAC, Savović J, Page MJ, et al. RoB 2: a revised tool for assessing risk of bias in randomised trials. *BMJ* 2019; **366**: 14898.
18. Balduzzi S, Rücker G, Schwarzer G. How to perform a meta-analysis with R: a practical tutorial. *Evid Based Cognitive Health* 2019; **22**(4): 153–60.
19. GRADE Working Group. Grading quality of evidence and strength of recommendations. *BMJ* 2004; **328**(7454): 1490.
20. Hultcrantz M, Rind D, Akl EA, et al. The GRADE Working Group clarifies the construct of certainty of evidence. *J Clin Epidemiol* 2017; **87**: 4–13.

21. Zeng L, Brignardello-Petersen R, Hultcrantz M, et al. GRADE guidelines 32: GRADE offers guidance on choosing targets of GRADE certainty of evidence ratings. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2021; **137**: 163–75.
22. Santesso N, Glenton C, Dahm P, et al. GRADE guidelines 26: informative statements to communicate the findings of systematic reviews of interventions. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2020; **119**: 126–35.
23. Chahla RE, Ruiz LM, Mena T, et al. Cluster Randomised Trials - Ivermectin Repurposing For COVID-19 Treatment Of Outpatients With Mild Disease In Primary Health Care Centers. *Research Square* 2021; Published online May 6  
<https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-495945/v1>.
24. Bryant A, Lawrie TA, Dowswell T, et al. Ivermectin for Prevention and Treatment of COVID-19 Infection: A Systematic Review, Meta-analysis, and Trial Sequential Analysis to Inform Clinical Guidelines. *Am J Ther* 2021; Published online June 17; doi: 10.1097/MJT.0000000000001402.
25. Petkov S. Multicenter, Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Study Investigating Efficacy, Safety and Tolerability of Ivermectin HUVE-19 in Patients with Proven SARS-CoV-2 Infection (Covid-19) and Manifested Clinical Symptoms. 2021.  
<https://www.clinicaltrialsregister.eu/ctr-search/trial/2020-002091-12/BG>. Accessed June 27, 2021.
26. Ahmed S, Karim MM, Ross AG, et al. A five day course of ivermectin for the treatment of COVID-19 may reduce the duration of illness. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases* 2020; S1201971220325066.

27. Beltran Gonzalez JL, González Gámez M, Mendoza Enciso EA, et al. Efficacy and safety of convalescent plasma and intravenous immunoglobulin in critically ill COVID-19 patients. A controlled clinical trial. *Medrxiv* 2021; published online March 21. <http://medrxiv.org/lookup/doi/10.1101/2021.03.28.21254507>
28. Vallejos J, Zoni R, Bangher M, et al. Ivermectin to prevent hospitalizations in patients with COVID-19 (IVERCOR-COVID19) a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial. *BMC Infect Dis* 2021; **21**(1):635.
29. Elgazzar A, Hany B, Youssef SA, Hany B, Hafez M, Moussa H. Efficacy and Safety of Ivermectin for Treatment and prophylaxis of COVID-19 Pandemic. *Research Square* 2020; published online December 28, 2020. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-100956/v1>
30. Chaccour C, Casellas A, Blanco-Di Matteo A, et al. The effect of early treatment with ivermectin on viral load, symptoms and humoral response in patients with non-severe COVID-19: A pilot, double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized clinical trial. *EClinicalMedicine* 2021; 100720.
31. Seet RCS, Quek AML, Ooi DSQ, et al. Positive impact of oral hydroxychloroquine and povidone-iodine throat spray for COVID-19 prophylaxis: An open-label randomized trial. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases* 2021; 106:314–22.
32. Chowdhury ATMM, Shahbaz M, Karim MR, Islam J, Guo D, He S. A Randomized Trial of Ivermectin-Doxycycline and Hydroxychloroquine-Azithromycin therapy on COVID19 patients. *Research Square* 2020; published online July 24. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-38896/v1>

33. Podder C, Chowdhury N, Sina M, Haque W. Outcome of ivermectin treated mild to moderate COVID-19 cases: a single-centre, open-label, randomised controlled study. *IMC Journal of Medical Science* 2020; **14(2)**: 002.
34. Mahmud R, Rahman MdM, Alam I, et al. Ivermectin in combination with doxycycline for treating COVID-19 symptoms: a randomized trial. *J Int Med Res* 2021; **49(5)**: 030006052110135.
35. Krolewiecki A, Lifschitz A, Moragas M, et al. Antiviral effect of high-dose ivermectin in adults with COVID-19: A proof-of-concept randomized trial. *EclinicalMedicine* 2021; 37: 100959.
36. Chachar AZ, Khan KA, Asif M, et al. Effectiveness of Ivermectin in SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 Patients. *ijSciences* 2020; **9(09)**: 31–5.
37. Kirti R, Roy R, Pattadar C, et al. Ivermectin as a potential treatment for mild to moderate COVID-19: A double blind randomized placebo-controlled trial. *Medrxiv* 2021; published online January 9.  
<http://medrxiv.org/lookup/doi/10.1101/2021.01.05.21249310>
38. Mohan A, Tiwari P, Suri T, et al. Ivermectin in mild and moderate COVID-19 (RIVET-COV): a randomized, placebo-controlled trial. *Research Square* 2021; published online February 2. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-191648/v1>
39. Samaha AA, Mouawia H, Fawaz M, et al. Effects of a Single Dose of Ivermectin on Viral and Clinical Outcomes in Asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infected Subjects: A Pilot Clinical Trial in Lebanon. *Viruses* 2021; **13(6)**: 989.

40. Bukhari KHS, Asghar A, Perveen N, et al. Efficacy of Ivermectin in COVID-19 Patients with Mild to Moderate Disease. *Medrxiv* 2021; published online February 5.  
<http://medrxiv.org/lookup/doi/10.1101/2021.02.02.21250840>
41. López-Medina E, López P, Hurtado IC, et al. Effect of Ivermectin on Time to Resolution of Symptoms Among Adults With Mild COVID-19: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA* 2021; **325**(14): 1426-1435.
42. Kishoria N, Mathur SL, Parmar V, et al. Ivermectin as adjuvant to hydroxychloroquine in patients resistant to standard treatment for SARS-CoV-2: Results of an open-label randomized clinical study. *PIJR* 2020;1–4.
43. Abd- Elsalam S, Noor RA, Badawi R, et al. Clinical Study Evaluating the Efficacy of Ivermectin in COVID- 19 Treatment: A Randomized Controlled Study. *J Med Virol* 2021; jmv.27122.
44. Biber A, Mandelboim M, Harmelin G, et al. Favorable outcome on viral load and culture viability using Ivermectin in early treatment of non-hospitalized patients with mild COVID-19 – A double-blind, randomized placebo-controlled trial. *Medrxiv* 2021; published online May 31. <http://medrxiv.org/lookup/doi/10.1101/2021.05.31.21258081>
45. Faisal R, Shah SFA, Hussain M. Potential use of azithromycin alone and in combination with ivermectin in fighting against the symptoms of COVID-19. *TPMJ* 2021; **28**(05): 737–41.
46. Okumuş N, Demirtürk N, Çetinkaya RA, et al. Evaluation of the effectiveness and safety of adding ivermectin to treatment in severe COVID-19 patients. *BMC Infect Dis* 2021; **21**(1): 411.



47. Bermejo Galan LE, dos Santos NM, Asato MS, et al. Phase 2 randomized study on chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine or ivermectin in hospitalized patients with severe manifestations of SARS-CoV-2 infection. *Pathogens and Global Health* 2021; **8**: 1–8.
48. Hashim HA, Maulood MF, Rasheed AM, Fatak DF, Kabah KK, Abdulamir AS. Controlled randomized clinical trial on using Ivermectin with Doxycycline for treating COVID-19 patients in Baghdad, Iraq. *Medrxiv* 2020; published online October 27. <http://medrxiv.org/lookup/doi/10.1101/2020.10.26.20219345>
49. Niaee MS, Gheibi N, Namdar P, et al. Ivermectin as an adjunct treatment for hospitalized adult COVID-19 patients: A randomized multi-center clinical trial [Internet]. *Research Square* 2020; published online November 24. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-109670/v1>
50. Babalola OE, Bode CO, Ajayi AA, et al. Ivermectin shows clinical benefits in mild to moderate COVID19: a randomized controlled double-blind, dose-response study in Lagos. *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine* 2021; hcab035.
51. Shahbaznejad L, Davoudi A, Eslami G, et al. Effect of ivermectin on COVID-19: A multicenter double-blind randomized controlled clinical trial. *Clinical Therapeutics* 2021; S0149291821002010.
52. Pott-Junior H, Bastos Paoliello MM, de Queiroz Constantino Miguel A, et al. Use of ivermectin in the treatment of Covid-19: a pilot trial. *Toxicology Reports* 2021; S2214750021000445.
53. Shoumann WM, Hegazy AA, Nafae RM, et al. Use of Ivermectin as a Potential Chemoprophylaxis for COVID-19 in Egypt: A Randomised Clinical Trial. *JCDR* 2021; **15**(2); 27-32.

54. Chahla RE, Medina Ruiz L, Ortega ES, et al. A randomized trial - intensive treatment based in ivermectin and iota-carrageenan as pre-exposure prophylaxis for COVID- 19 in healthcare agents. *Medrxiv* 2021; published online March 30.  
<http://medrxiv.org/lookup/doi/10.1101/2021.03.26.21254398>
55. Ivermectin for COVID-19 (Matrix of evidence, Epistemonikos).  
<http://www.epistemonikos.org/matrixes/601138e77aaac854cf94ac1f>. Accessed June 27, 2021.
56. Popp M, Stegemann M, Metzendorf M-I, et al. Ivermectin for preventing and treating COVID-19. Cochrane Haematology Group, Cochrane Infectious Diseases Group, editors. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2021; published online Jul 28.  
<http://doi.wiley.com/10.1002/14651858.CD015017.pub2>
57. COVID-NMA. <https://covid-nma.com>. Accessed June 27, 2021.
58. Hill A, Abdulamir A, Ahmed S, Asghar A, Babalola OE, Basri R, et al. Meta-analysis of randomized trials of ivermectin to treat SARS-CoV-2 infection. *Research square* 2021; published online January 19. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-148845/v1>
59. Karale S, Bansal V, Makadia J, et al. A Meta-analysis of Mortality, Need for ICU admission, Use of Mechanical Ventilation and Adverse Effects with Ivermectin Use in COVID-19 Patients. *Medrxiv* 2021; published online May 4.  
<http://medrxiv.org/lookup/doi/10.1101/2021.04.30.21256415>
60. GLUCOCOVID investigators, Corral-Gudino L, Bahamonde A, Arnaiz-Revillas F, Gómez-Barquero J, Abadía-Otero J, et al. Methylprednisolone in adults hospitalized with COVID-19 pneumonia: An open-label randomized trial (GLUCOCOVID). *Wien Klin Wochenschr.* 2021 Apr;133(7–8):303–11.

61. Cao B, Wang Y, Wen D, et al. A Trial of Lopinavir-Ritonavir in Adults Hospitalized with Severe Covid-19. *NEJM* 2020; **382**(19): 1787–99.
62. Davoudi-Monfared E, Rahmani H, Khalili H, et al. A Randomized Clinical Trial of the Efficacy and Safety of Interferon  $\beta$ -1a in Treatment of Severe COVID-19. *Antimicrob Agents Chemother* 2020; published online August 20.  
<https://journals.asm.org/doi/10.1128/AAC.01061-20>
63. Avendaño-Solà C, Ramos-Martínez A, Muñoz-Rubio E, Ruiz-Antorán B, de Molina RM, Torres F, et al. Convalescent Plasma for COVID-19: A multicenter, randomized clinical trial. *Medrxiv* 2020; published online September 29.  
<http://medrxiv.org/lookup/doi/10.1101/2020.08.26.20182444>
64. The RECOVERY Collaborative Group. Dexamethasone in Hospitalized Patients with Covid-19. *NEJM* 2021; **384**(8): 693–704.
65. RECOVERY collaborative group. Convalescent plasma in patients admitted to hospital with COVID-19 (RECOVERY): a randomised controlled, open-label, platform trial. *The Lancet* 2021; **397**(10289): 2049–59.
66. Horby PW, Mafham M, Bell JL, et al. Lopinavir–ritonavir in patients admitted to hospital with COVID-19 (RECOVERY): a randomised, controlled, open-label, platform trial. *The Lancet* 2020; **396**(10259): 1345–52.
67. WHO Solidarity Trial Consortium. Repurposed Antiviral Drugs for Covid-19 — Interim WHO Solidarity Trial Results. *NEJM* 2021;**384**(6):497–511.
68. WHO. Handbook for good clinical research practice (GCP).  
[https://www.who.int/medicines/areas/quality\\_safety/safety\\_efficacy/gcp1.pdf](https://www.who.int/medicines/areas/quality_safety/safety_efficacy/gcp1.pdf). Accessed June 27, 2021.

69. FDA. Good Clinical practice (GCP). <https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/center-drug-evaluation-and-research-cder/good-clinical-practice>. Accessed June 27, 2021.
70. ISO 14155:2011. Clinical investigation of medical devices for human subjects — Good clinical practice. <https://www.iso.org/standard/45557.html>. Accessed June 27, 2021.

Journal Pre-proof